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THE TEACHING OF HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORY

That the study of the history and institutions of Hispanic America has won a definite place in the curricula of our larger universities and colleges is no longer a question for debate. Yet the subject is so relatively new, the boundaries of the field so ill-defined, the paucity of trustworthy guides so noticeable that the symposium suggested by Dr. Robertson is quite in order.

Naturally the methods of approach to our subject will vary according to the point of view of the instructor, the character of the institution, and to a certain extent the demands of the students. It is assumed for the purpose of the present discussion that we are dealing with a general course extending over two or three hours per week throughout the year, and advanced or seminar courses. Limitations of space preclude a treatment of special courses on limited fields.

If only one course is given it should clearly partake of the character of a general survey. Generally speaking, it should not be open to first-year students. Prerequisites should include at least one course in both European and American history. The method of presentation necessarily depends upon such variable factors as the size of the class, the character of the students, and the predilections of the instructor. The lecture method, however, offers certain distinct advantages. It permits the instructor to cover a large amount of ground in a short space of time and partially solves the problem of the dearth of readable texts. Obviously the lectures should be interspersed with discussions and reports.

As regards the content of such a course, no two instructors will be in complete or possibly even substantial agreement. In his general course, the writer has included the following broad headings: The European background; Pre-Columbian America; the period of discovery, exploration, and settlement; the Spanish and Portuguese Colonial Systems; the Wars of Independence; the problems confronting the new states. The foregoing topics cover roughly the first half of the course. Then follows a discussion of the evolution and present-day problems of the various Hispanic American nations. The larger countries are treated in considerable detail; the smaller ones—in some cases grouped together—in a more summary manner. The course concludes with a number of lectures devoted to the international relations of Hispanic America.

This bald résumé is virtually meaningless without some commentary.

To be sure certain periods, on which there is an abundance of easily accessible material, call for no discussion here. Such subjects as the European background, the period of discovery and exploration, the colonial system, represent sections of the field through which the student may pursue his way with the minimum of guidance. On the other hand a number of epochs are well calculated to put the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the teacher to a severe test. The field of Pre-Columbian America is strewn with pitfalls for the unwary. Only the specialist in American archaeology and ethnology may approach this subject with confidence. The writer has been content to give his students in an orderly and concise way the results of the investigations of Bandelier, Markham, Beuchat, Joyce, Lehmann, Hrdlička, Ameghino, etc., at the same time levying tribute upon the illustrative material in Kingsborough's *Mexican Antiquities* and Professor Bingham's articles on the Incaic civilization in Peru in the *National Geographic*. In the great majority of our American universities the only opportunity vouchsafed our students for a glimpse into the mysterious and fascinating realm of American archaeology is in connection with courses in Hispanic American history.

Probably the most baffling portions of the course are those dealing with the evolution of the individual countries. A too orthodox insistence on certain canons of historical teaching may easily prove disastrous. For instance a strict adherence to Freeman's famous dictum of history being past politics results in a kind of expanded Ploetz's *Epitome* and would go far to justify the belief—fortunately fast disappearing—that the history of the Spanish American republics is but an arid chronicle of revolutions. Aker's *History of South America*, in many ways a very serviceable book, partakes of this fault. Fortunately there is no longer any excuse for the well-equipped teacher becoming a votary of this dry-as-dust method. Thanks to the easily accessible works of the Hispanic American historians themselves it is now possible to treat the history of our most important sister republics with something of the largeness of view and insight which we rightly demand of the teacher of United States or European history. In the case of Argentina, for instance, we may witness in the pages of her writers, the unfolding of a vigorous nationality, stamped with an individualism which has sharply differentiated Argentina from her neighbors. The transformation of the heritage of colonial days, the emergence and growth of new ideals, the development of a social consciousness, the painful struggle towards a more real democracy—these and other national characteristics are revealed in the

works of historians such as Ramos Mejía, Saldías, Pelliza, Navarro y Lamarca, and sociologists of the type of Ernesto Quesada, Ingenieros, Bunge, and Colmo. At the same time the works of Mitre, Albredi, Sarmiento, López constitute an almost inexhaustible quarry for material on certain more restricted epochs. The writings of Varnhagen, Pereira da Silva, Capistrano de Abreu, Oliveira Lima occupy a somewhat analogous position for Brazil. Joaquim Nabuco's three volume history of the life and times of his father, the celebrated jurisconsult Nabuco de Araujo, is not only one of the most notable monographs in the whole domain of South American history but makes it possible for the teacher to reconstruct the myriad-sided civilization which flourished under the last of the Brazilian emperors. The number and importance of the members of the Chilean school of history are so well known as to make mention superfluous.

It would be unwise, in the judgment of the writer, to regard the treatment of present-day conditions as entirely subordinate to the other sections of the course. Experience has shown him that the majority of his students are enthusiastically interested in contemporary political, social, and economic problems. Many of the students are fitting themselves for foreign trade; some are looking forward to a career in the diplomatic and consular service. They are all eager to learn of the natural resources of Hispanic America and the growth and direction of its foreign trade. While certain of these subjects strictly speaking belong in the Economic Departments of our institution, under present conditions the teacher of Hispanic American history will probably feel it incumbent upon himself to include these subjects in his own chosen field.

Various methods of approach suggest themselves. The most logical is to take up these topics *seriatim*, pointing out their significance as affecting Hispanic America in general and certain states and regions in particular. Thus several hours might be spent in a comprehensive discussion of political parties and politics, transportation, immigration, natural resources, and the like. The writer has preferred, however, to sacrifice logic to expediency and convenience of presentation. At the risk of a certain amount of repetition he has taken up these topics from the point of view of the individual states. In connection with present-day Argentina, for instance, the following subjects are discussed in succession: government; political parties and politics (with special reference to the results of the Saenz-Peña Reform Bill of 1912); population (including, of course, immigration); transportation; products and industries; trade and commerce; education, literature and the fine arts. As Argentina is

the first country subjected to this intensive treatment, care is taken to stress those aspects of the subject more or less common to all of Hispanic America. It is hardly necessary to add that such a detailed survey is hardly desirable or even possible save in the case of the larger states.

The latter part of the course is reserved for a number of lectures on the relations of the republics of Hispanic America with each other, with Europe, and with the United States. The approach is naturally historical. The subjects most fully treated are: the recognition of the newly liberated nations; the genesis and development of the Monroe Doctrine; the growth and significance of the Pan-American movement; and finally, the reaction of the Great War on Hispanic America. As regards the last topic the writer considers it incumbent upon the teacher to make clear the changes which the events of the last few years have wrought in the national and international status of our sister republics. The concluding lectures of the course deal with the methods best calculated to strengthen the bonds, both cultural and economic, between the United States and Hispanic America.

A discussion of bibliography hardly lies within the scope of this symposium. Yet it is perhaps not irrelevant to suggest certain aids which the writer has found especially useful. For material on contemporary developments students may with much profit be directed to the *Daily Commerce Reports*, certain numbers of the *Special Agent Series*, *Inter-America*, and *The Americas*, the latter periodical being published by the National City Bank of New York. The teacher will of course keep in touch with reviews dealing with his *Fach*. No real grasp of the historical evolution of Brazil is possible without the aid of the *Revista do Instituto Historico e Geographico* of Rio de Janeiro. To a somewhat less extent is this true in the case of Argentina of the admirable *Revista de Derecho, Historia y Letras* edited by the distinguished publicist Dr. Zeballos. Of great value also is the *Revista Argentina de Ciencias Políticas*. Of our own HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW as a clearing house for the whole field nothing need be said. It has already become indispensable to the teacher and serious student.

Hispanic American History holds out great possibilities for seminar courses. Unfortunately in most of our institutions bibliographical facilities are lacking for intensive work in more than a few fields. The writer has found that certain phases of the diplomatic relations between the United States and Hispanic America can be fairly satisfactorily handled on the basis of our Government Documents (especially the Foreign Relations) supplemented by a small amount of easily assembled

material in French and Spanish. Especially is this true for the epoch of the French Intervention in Mexico. Another subject, on which material is rapidly accumulating, is Hispanic America and the War. The remarkable collection of Braziliana, gathered by President-Emeritus Branner, and placed at the disposal of the University, has made possible intensive work at Stanford on certain aspects of Brazilian history, notably the reign of Dom Pedro II.

In conclusion it may not be amiss to recall that Hispanic America possesses an historical portrait gallery of surpassing interest. The biographies of the early explorers and the protagonists of the Wars of Independence may be counted on to kindle the imagination of the average student. But the teacher misses a rare opportunity if he fails to invest with a living interest historical characters of a later epoch. Such names as José Bonifacio, García Moreno, Sarmiento, Alberdi, Balmaceda, Ruy Barbosa, Limantour—picked out at random—are cases in point. The lives and achievements of such men, if properly presented, not only illumine the period in which they lived but also bring home the realization that Hispanic America has contributed her quota to the world's statesmen and constructive thinkers. This impression will be reënforced if suggestive parallels are drawn from biographical material in the field of United States and European history.

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WHAT TO TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH IT IN HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORY

Far more important than "What to teach" in Hispanic American History is "How to teach" it. Skillful manipulation of the student's curiosity in this new field will develop the sort of enthusiasm that creates graduate students and historical writers. If the proper appeal is made in the beginning, and the student is given the thrill of discovering discrepancies in Prescott, Irving, and the *Britannica*, the instructor may use wide latitude in the selection of material for his course; he will know that his work is going to "carry on", and that the proper balance and perspective will work out in the mind of the individual student. On the other hand, the class that lacks glamor of such a romantic beginning will have to be coaxed through a carefully-prepared syllabus, the balance will have to be watched scrupulously by the instructor, and much of the lecture time will be spent in the dictation of notes on topics of major importance.